

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

RSR-01 /080 W

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R 192025 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6394

INFO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 658

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, NZ

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT BEGINS TWO MONTH BREAK

REF: WELLINGTON 371

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT ADJOURNED MARCH 16 AFTER A SHORT FOUR WEEK SESSION AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RESUME PROCEEDINGS UNTIL LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. LABOUR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SEVERELY CRITICIZED BY OPPOSITION FOR CALLING EARLY SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WHEN WORKLOAD WAS SO LIGHT. CURRENT RECESS IS MADE NECESSARY BY LACK OF DRAFT LEGISLATION. END SUMMARY.

2. NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT ENDED FIRST SESSION OF 1973 TERM MARCH 16, ONE MONTH AFTER IT OPENED, AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RESUME ITS PROCEEDINGS UNTIL LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. EXACT DATE FOR RECONVENING WAS NOT GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER KIRK. OPPOSITION USED OCCASION TO SEVERELY CRITICIZE LABOUR GOVERNMENT FOR ITS QUOTE INEPT HANDLING UNQUOTE OF FIRST SESSION AND FOR CALLING PARLIAMENT INTO SESSION WITHOUT FIRST MAKING CERTAIN THAT AN EARLY SESSION WAS REQUIRED. OPPOSITION USED ONE MONTH SESSION TO GOOD ADVANTAGE BY CONTINUING SHARP QUESTIONS WHICH UNDERScored CABINET MINISTERS' UNCLASSIFIED

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LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PORTFOLIOS.

3. RECESS WILL BE USED BY COMMITTEES TO REVIEW WHAT LIMITED LEGISLATION WAS INTRODUCED, AND BY LAW DRAFTING OFFICES TO COMPLETE DRAFTS OF LEGISLATION NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT REMAINDER OF LABOUR' S CAMPAIGN PROMISES. PRIME MINISTER KIRK HAS NOTED IN PRIVATE THAT THIS BREAK IS NEEDED BECAUSE DRAFTING OFFICE IS SHORT STAFFED AND UNABLE TO PRODUCE ALL THE LEGISLATION LABOUR HAD IN MIND FOR THIS SESSION. BREAK WILL ALSO GIVE HARD PRESSED CABINET MINISTERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR PORTFOLIOS AND TO MAP OUT MORE CLEARLY LABOUR POLICIES ON A NUMBER OF ITEMS.

4. DESPITE KIRK' S STATEMENT EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT MINISTERS WOULD DO LITTLE TRAVELLING, AT LEAST FOUR WILL USE THE BREAK PERIOD FOR OVERSEAS TOURS. THIS INCLUDES DEFENSE MINISTER FAULKNER' S TRIP TO SEVERAL SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, AGRICULTURAL MINISTER MOYLE' S VISIT TO THE US AND EUROPE, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WATT' S VISIT TO EUROPE AND THE US, AND MINISTER OF OVERSEAS TRADE WALDING' S VISIT TO PRC, EUROPE AND THE US.
WOOD

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973WELLIN00658
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730333/aaaaialf.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EAP
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 WELLINGTON 371
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29-Oct-2001 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <01-Feb-2002 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 971215
Subject: NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT BEGINS TWO MONTH BREAK
TAGS: PGOV, NZ
To: AUCKLAND
CANBERRA
EA
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005